

The Road Not Taken

No doubt it is useless to speculate, but here's fruit for speculation nevertheless. If you only did useful things, you wouldn't be on this site anyway.

From Doris Kearns Goodwin's *No Ordinary Time*, a history of the home front in World War II:

“In truth Roosevelt’s mind that summer (1942) was moving in a different direction; his dream was to join hands with Republican Wendell Willkie in the creation of a new liberal party that would combine the liberal elements of the Democratic Party, minus the reactionary elements in the South, with the liberal elements of the Republican Party. Since Willkie had been defeated at the Republican convention by the conservative wing of his party, Roosevelt hoped he would be receptive to the idea. ‘We ought to have two real parties,’ Roosevelt told his aide Sam Rosenman, ‘one liberal and the other conservative. As it is now each party is split by dissenters...’

“Willkie was instantly drawn to the idea. ‘You tell the President that I’m ready to devote almost full time to this,’ he said.”

(Nothing came of the idea, as Willkie died of a massive heart attack that fall.)

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From H.R. Haldeman's *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House*:

April 22, 1972:

“The P said that he thought he (Treasury Secretary John Connally) was the only man who could be P, and that led us back to a discussion we had started with E (Presidential Assistant John Ehrlichman) on the restructuring of the two-party system, the feeling being that the P and Connally, after the election, could move to build a new party, the Independent Conservative Party, or something of that sort, that would bring in a coalition of Southern Democrats and other conservative Democrats, along with the middle-road to conservative Republicans. Problem would be to work it out so that we included Rockefeller and Reagan on the Republican spectrum, and picked up as many of the Democrats as we could. By structuring it right, we could develop a new majority party. Under a new name. Get control of the Congress without an election, simply by the realignment, and make a truly historic change in the entire American political structure...If we formed a coalition, with the two of them being the strong men, Connally clearly would emerge as the candidate for the new party, in '76, and the P would strongly back him in that.”

(Nothing came of this idea, either, as Mr. Nixon resigned the presidency on August 9, 1974, following a massive ethical attack.)



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